



**An  
Phríomh-Oifig  
Staidrimh**

Central  
Statistics  
Office



**QQI**

Quality and Qualifications Ireland  
Dearbhu Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**BETWEEN**

**THE CENTRAL STATISTICS OFFICE**

**AND**

**QUALITY AND QUALIFICATIONS IRELAND**

**January 2019**

**(the Parties)**

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## **PREAMBLE**

### **Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Mandate and Mission**

QQI is an independent state agency, under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills, responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. It was established in 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

QQI's mission is to sustain public confidence in the quality of education and training, promote trust in the National Framework of Qualifications and drive a culture of continuous improvement by education and training providers.

### **Central Statistics Office (CSO) Mandate and Mission**

The CSO's mandate, as set out in the Statistics Act 1993 is:

*"the collection, compilation, extraction and dissemination for statistical purposes of information relating to economic, social and general activities and conditions in the State"*

### **Statistical Potential of Administrative Records**

The CSO is committed to improving and broadening the range of high quality information it provides on societal and economic change. The growth in secondary data sources poses an opportunity to develop new outputs that support policy-making and accountability. With this aim in mind, the CSO has identified the statistical potential of administrative data sources to analyse outcomes for learners from Further and Higher Education.

The data held by the QQI represents an excellent source of historical information on Further Education activity. The transfer of this data to the CSO would facilitate a future statistical collaboration between the CSO and QQI.

Factors contributing to the request for access to QQI data holdings.

- Section 30 of the Statistics Act 1993 which governs the 'Use of Records of Public Authorities for Statistical Purposes'<sup>1</sup>.
- Section 31 of the Statistics Act 1993 which governs the 'Co-operation of public authorities with the Office'<sup>2</sup>.
- Article 17(a) of Regulation 223/2009 as amended by Regulation 2015/759 provides 'Access by and involvement of the NSI's, other national authorities and the Commission (Eurostat) pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be limited to administrative records within their own respective public administrative system'. In this regard provision should be made for data that concerns another Department<sup>3</sup>.
- Article 24 of Regulation 223/2009 as amended by Regulation 2015/759: 'In order to reduce the burden on respondents, the NSIs and other national authorities and the Commission (Eurostat) shall have access to administrative data sources, from within their respective public administrative system, to the extent that these data are necessary for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics'<sup>4</sup>.
- Regulation No (EU) 2017/881 implementing Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 – establishes the right to hold a census of population along with the required information to be collected as per section 4.4 part (i) – Educational Attainment, which is to be broken down by sex and broad age groups<sup>5</sup>.
- The CSO Statement of Strategy 2016-2019 (Aim 2) outlines in detail the goal of 'Increase use of secondary data sources including administrative and Big Data'. Access to secondary sources of accurate, detailed and up to date data enhances the value and usefulness of the project outputs vis a vis developing targeted policy interventions<sup>6</sup>.
- The National Statistics Board (NSB) strategy in the "NSB Strategic Priorities for Official Statistics 2015-2020: A World Class Statistical System for Ireland" identifies the following key strategic goal: The production of world class official statistics based on an Irish Statistical System comprising public sector administrative data and a comprehensive programme of surveys to support national user needs. (Page 3)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1993/act/21/enacted/en/html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1993/act/21/enacted/en/html>

<sup>3</sup> Regulation 223/2009 as amended by Regulation 2015/759 – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015R0759&from=EN>

<sup>4</sup> Regulation 223/2009 as amended by Regulation 2015/759 – <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015R0759&from=EN>

<sup>5</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJ.L.2017.135.01.0006.01.ENG>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/aboutus/documents/SoS20162019.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/NSB\\_Strategy\\_2015-2020.pdf](http://www.nsb.ie/media/nsbie/pdfdocs/NSB_Strategy_2015-2020.pdf)

## Agreement

### General

1. QQI shall provide the data to the CSO for statistical purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Statistics Act 1993.
2. The CSO shall use the data provided by QQI for statistical purposes only, in accordance with the Statistics Act, 1993, EU statistical law and EU and national data protection law. In particular, treatment of data shall be subject to the CSO's Code of Practice on Statistical Confidentiality<sup>8</sup>.
3. The CSO shall ensure that all linking of QQI data with other data sources, both CSO and non-CSO, will be carried out in accordance with the CSO Data Protocol<sup>9</sup>.
4. Should QQI propose to make significant changes to any system for the storage and retrieval of information that could impact the CSO's ability to carry out its mandate it shall consult with the CSO as early as possible in accordance with Section 31 of the Statistics Act, 1993.
5. QQI shall inform the CSO as early as possible of any proposed changes in availability/scope of QQI data which could potentially impact on the CSO in carrying out its mandate. Any proposed changes shall be discussed by both parties.
6. The CSO shall appoint a Liaison Officer as the main point of contact with QQI; this role shall encompass a Data Custodian function, with responsibility for the management and use of QQI data by the CSO. QQI shall likewise appoint a Liaison Officer as the main point of contact with the CSO.
7. A delivery is scheduled to be received each year in relation to information currently collected by QQI for operational purposes.
8. The data requested by the CSO relates to individual level information on award recipients. Examples of the information requested includes age, gender, along with information on the award an individual has completed.
9. This delivery and any amendments to said delivery are being requested by the CSO under Section 30 of the Statistics Act 1993. This MoU serves as a notice request for the purposes of that section of the Act. Changes to this list, and the composition of the data files thereon, shall be agreed between the QQI Liaison Officer and the CSO Liaison Officer.
10. If required, the CSO and QQI will meet to discuss any issues which may be of concern in carrying out statistical processing.
11. Any amendments to the structure or frequency of the existing data transfer between the two organisations shall be submitted through, and considered by both, the Liaison Officers and relevant senior management. Any changes authorised shall take into account the relevant resource implications for both organisations, and shall conform to the criteria of being necessary and proportionate in line with the Data Protection Act 2018<sup>10</sup> and the General Data Protection Regulation<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/statisticalconfidentiality/codeofpractice/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/csodataprotocol/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2018/7/eng/enacted/a0718.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679&from=EN>

## **File Security**

12. The CSO and QQI shall maintain the appropriate infrastructure to ensure the secure transfer of data between the two organisations. In particular, data will first be encrypted then loaded to a password-protected Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP) server maintained by the CSO.
13. QQI will ensure that data will only be exchanged between QQI and the CSO using secure transfer procedures.

## **Data Protection**

14. Data received by the CSO from QQI will be subject to the relevant safeguards as outlined in Section 5 and 6 of the CSO's "Information for Data Providers" notice<sup>12</sup>.

## **Statistical quality**

15. Data files shall be accompanied by the relevant metadata, where available.

## **Review**

16. This MoU may be reviewed at any time at the request of either party. Any changes to the MoU shall be affected only with the mutual agreement of QQI and CSO.

## **Communication**

17. The approval of this MoU and its content and procedures shall be communicated within the CSO and QQI; such communication shall include publication on the respective websites.

## **Signatures**

*Signed:*

**Pádraig Dalton**  
**Director General**  
**Central Statistics Office**  
**Skehard Road**  
**Cork.**

*Signed:*

**Padraig Walsh**  
**Chief Executive**  
**Quality and Qualifications Ireland**  
**Denzille Lane**  
**Dublin 2.**

*Date:* 15/1/19



*Date:* 21/1/19



<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/igdp/csodatapolicies/informationfordataproviders/>